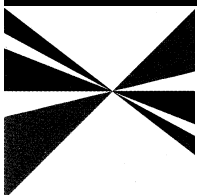


Livable Places PROFILES

OLD PASADENA *Pasadena, CA*



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

1996

Old Pasadena has racked up big sales and big awards: Sales tax revenue has increased six-fold during the last ten years. Awards include the 1995 Downtown Achievement Award of the International Downtown Association and the Great American Main Street Award of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Old Pasadena Brings Renewed Life to World-Renown City of Roses

Case Study
Total Acres
120

City
Population
135,000

*Avg. Minimum
& Maximum
Temperature*
52° → 78°

Key Features
*One Colorado
retail complex
Holly Street
Village mixed-
use project
Senior Center
Two Parks*

Pasadena, California, is known throughout the world as the home of the Tournament of Roses and Caltech. Yet, its historic core suffered the decline and blight of other inner city downtowns. Beginning in the 1970's, local preservationists and businesspeople successfully fought off efforts to bulldoze the area.

After the city prepared a conservation plan in 1978 for the district, "Old Pasadena" began a revival that has turned the area into one of the most attractive and popular destinations in Southern California.



▲ *Strolling on sunny Colorado Boulevard.*



Ground-floor retail enhances this parking structure.



Transit stops blend into the streetscape.



A lively night at an old-style diner.



Trees and wide sidewalks create places to socialize.

Public / Private Investment

The city's investment of \$27 million to build the public parking structures was the key catalyst to promote what has grown to nearly \$400 million in private investment for acquiring and renovating virtually all the buildings in the fourteen-block area.

Special Features and Events

The One Colorado development includes a central plaza that enlivens the inside of the block. The alleys have also been preserved as pedestrian walkways, while continuing to provide service access. There are two parks in the area. The Pasadena Senior Center, located in Memorial Park, is scheduled for a major expansion. There are two senior citizen housing developments in Old Pasadena.

A summer concert series began last year in the Memorial Park bandshell. Street festivals were an early feature of the revival of Old Pasadena, including the Doo Dah Parade, but lost favor with local merchants. A twice-yearly arts and crafts fair in Central Park continues. The annual Rose Parade and events at the nearby Rose Bowl draw large crowds to celebrate in the area.

Future Plans

A major \$7 million streetscape program has been planned and budgeted to begin construction in 1996. Financed by parking meter revenue, this package of improvements will upgrade lighting, landscaping, street furniture and signage throughout the area. The existing Business Improvement District is expected to be expanded and modified to cover the entire area and to levy assessments for improved marketing and maintenance.

The redevelopment agency is actively pursuing the private renovation of the remaining buildings in the area that have not been rehabilitated and made seismically safe. The Blue Line light rail extension is under construction, and is expected to be completed in the next five years. It will add two stops in the Old Pasadena area, connecting with downtown Los Angeles and the regional rail system.

Lessons Learned

City support is vital and so are public-private partnerships. It takes as much effort to continue to be successful as it does to become successful. Attracting thousands of visitors can diminish the attractiveness for local residents. Balance is the key.



The Local Government Commission and the Center for Livable Communities are EPA Transportation Partners.

Funding for this series of livable community profiles is provided by the Southern California Association of Governments.



At Holly Street Village, upper-floor housing is setback above the retail storefronts. The model at left shows the path of future light rail that runs through the development.



The mix of housing and stores at Holly St. Village brings businesses and residents closer together.

A Colorful History

Pasadena's historic downtown began in the 1870's at the intersection of Fair Oaks and Colorado. But, as Pasadena grew, commercial growth moved eastward. After the Depression of 1929, no new construction took place in the old downtown, which steadily declined. By the 1960's, plans were made to demolish the area and replace it with new commercial office towers. Resistance to those plans by local preservationists and merchants led to the adoption in 1978 of the "Plan for Old Pasadena." The plan prohibited demolition in a fourteen-block area.

Artists and music clubs paved the way for Old Pasadena's revival as entrepreneurs steadily rehabilitated and upgraded the area's historic buildings. The creation of a "limited" redevelopment plan in 1985 resulted in three parking structures (one private, two public) as the area became a mecca for movies and restaurants. After ten years of effort, an entire block of restored buildings opened in 1992 as the One Colorado project, providing 280,000 square feet of retail, dining and entertainment uses. An Old Pasadena Summit in 1993 brought together businesses and citizens to craft a new vision of a "hometown downtown." Restrictions were placed on bars and nightclub expansion and commitments were made to promote housing and to improve maintenance, security and the streetscape.

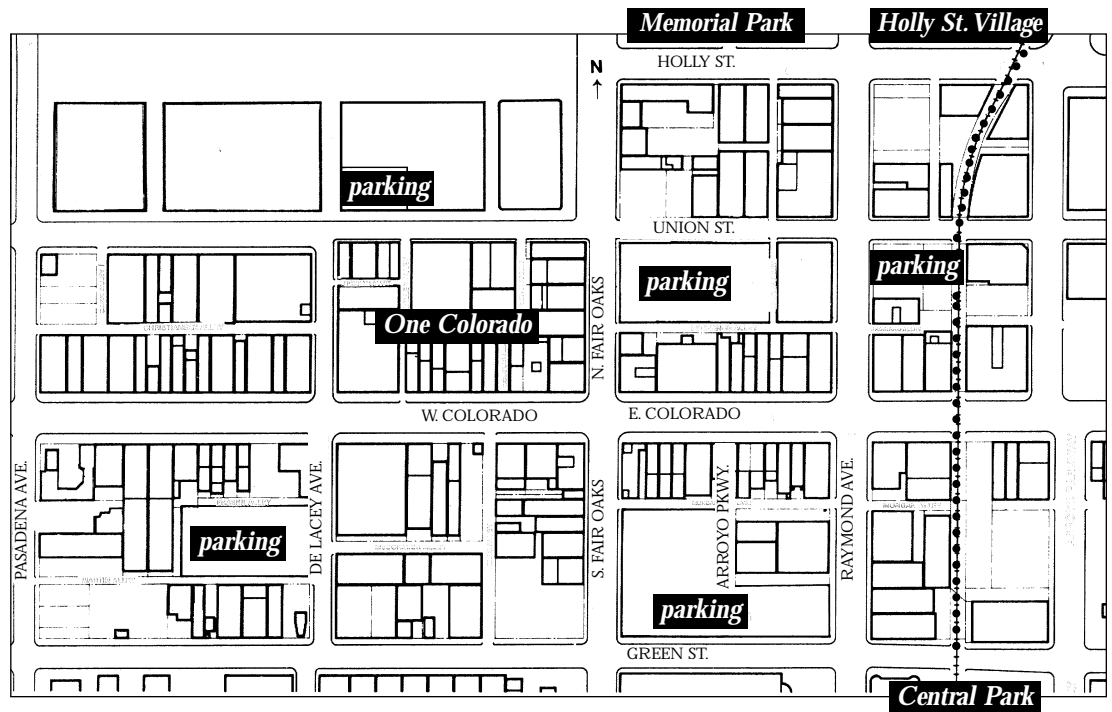
Transportation & Access. The area has easy access from three freeways. Four parking structures have been built since 1986, accommodating 2,600 spaces. There are bus routes along both Colorado and Fair Oaks, and a free shuttle links Old Pasadena to the South Lake retail and business district. City-provided bike racks are positioned throughout the area. Nearly \$7 million is being invested in improving the pedestrian environment in the area's streets and alleys.

Old Pasadena

City of Pasadena
William C. Reynolds
Director of Housing & Development
100 N. Garfield Ave. Pasadena, CA 91109
☎ (818) 405-4650 fax (818) 405-4773

Old Pasadena Vicinity Map

Old Pasadena is a vibrant blend of mixed uses. With the intersection of Colorado Blvd. and Fair Oaks Ave. at its center, the area has provided for ample parking for visitors to the area. The dotted line indicates future light-rail extension of the METRO Blue Line.



Mix of Uses

Old Pasadena has a wide range of retail, entertainment, office, service and residential uses. Thousands of night and week-end visitors are attracted by more than 100 restaurants, nightclubs, bars and cafe as well as nearly 4,000 movie seats in two cineplexes. Over 150 retail and service shops offer both unique local businesses and major regional and national chains.

Office uses predominate in those buildings of more than one story, with thousands of additional office employees within easy reach of the area on foot or on the downtown shuttle bus. The city's major civic facilities, including City Hall, the Convention Center and Central Library, are also within easy walking distance.

Two new housing developments are being built that will add more than 150 units to the 700 existing residential units in the Old Pasadena district.

Reasons for Success

Old Pasadena is one of the largest traditional commercial areas in Southern California, with an unsurpassed stock of historic architecture. Revitalization required tenacious advocacy by leaders representing property owners, merchants, preservationists and city officials to keep the vision moving forward. Strong rules for preserving the architectural legacy were put into place that effectively governed the rehabilitation of the entire district. Entrepreneurs were willing to make substantial investment in an area that had long been bypassed. Today, they provide unique shops and restaurants that drew trend-setters looking for something special. The presence of a large office population within walking distance helps support the restaurants and shops with a significant daytime clientele.



Two shots of the One Colorado complex: The cineplex offers entertainment and nighttime vitality (top); the courtyard is an appealing locale for workers during the day.